In the specification:

Replace paragraph 1 on page 2 as follows:

Methods are well known in the art for tracking the level of the portions of a signal that are free of speech (or in-band tones) to perform noise level estimation. Thus, the prior art teaches the use of voice activity detection on a signal of interest to control noise level estimation on the signal. Example of such prior art systems are set forth in:

[1] "Noise signal prediction system". Joji Kane and Akira Nohara . US patent US5295225.

[2] "Noise suppression of acoustic signal in telephone set". Toshio Yoshida and Michitaka Sisido. US patent US5617472.

[3] "Method of detecting silence in a packetized voice stream". Franck Beaucoup. ~~Mitel patent application #435.~~ Canadian Patent Application No 2,309,524, published November 28, 2000.

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